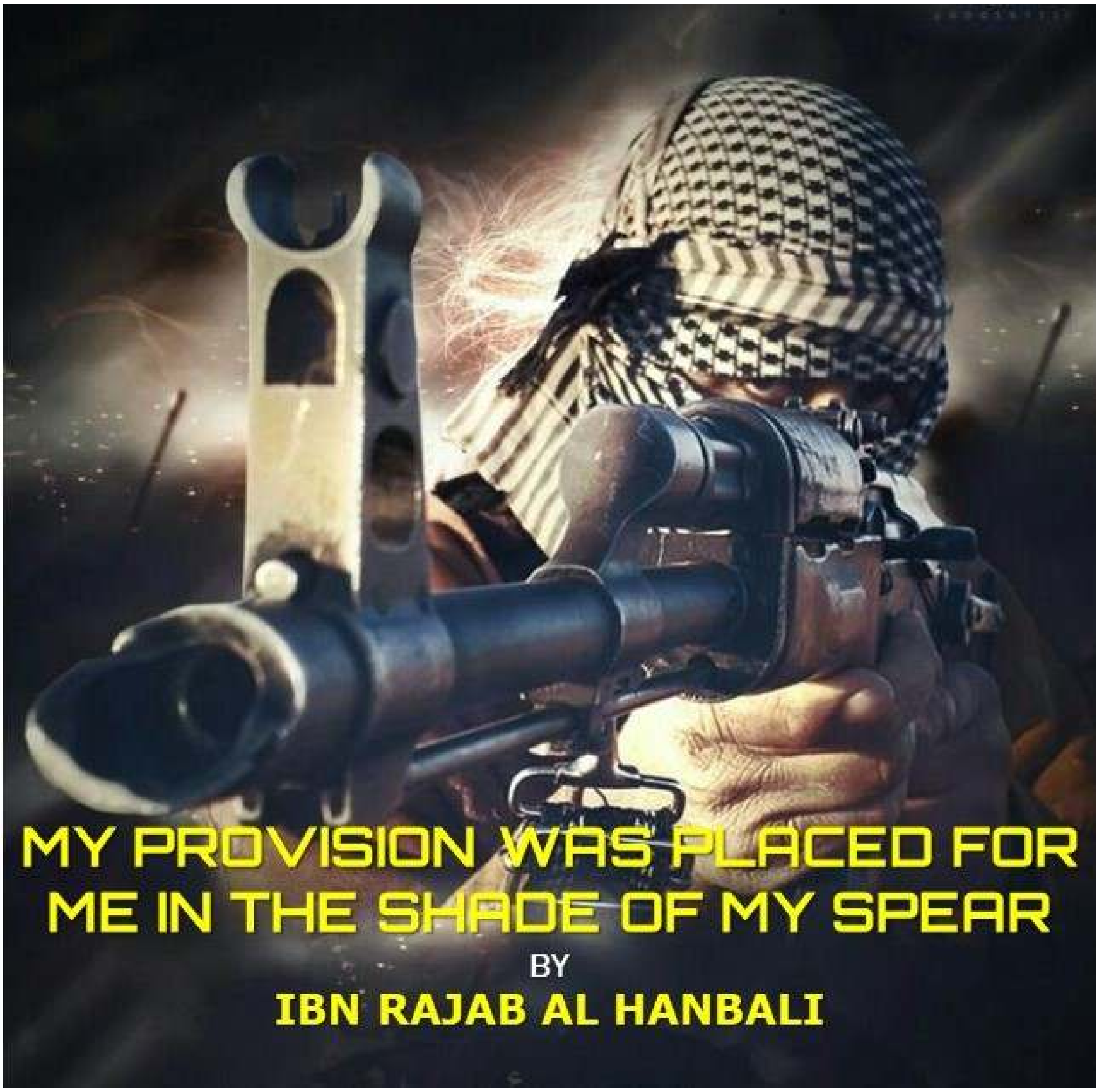

MY PROVISION WAS PLACED FOR ME IN THE SHADE OF MY SPEAR

By
Ibn Rajab Al Hanbali

This a commentary on the hadith of Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم),

"MY PROVISION WAS PLACED FOR ME IN THE SHADE OF MY SPEAR."

The hadīth was reported by Imām Ahmad and others on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar and it is Sahīh. The commentary is from the book by Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī titled “Al Hikam Al Jadīrah Bil Idhā’ah.”

This hadīth indicates that Allah did not send His messenger to endeavour to seek the dunya, nor to gather the dunya and its treasures, nor to strive to seek its causes, rather He sent him as a caller to His tawhīd with the sword.

What is implied by this is that he kills Allah’s enemies who refuse to accept tawhīd, legitimizes the spilling of their blood and the taking of their wealth, and enslaves their women and children, and thereby his provision becomes what Allah has given him of spoils from the property of His enemy.

This is because wealth was created by Allah for the children of Adam only to assist them in obeying and worshipping Him. So whoever uses it to assist himself in kufr of Allah and shirk with Him, then Allah will give mastery to His Messenger and his followers over him, so that they seize it from him and return it back to one who is more worthy than him from the people who worship Allah, practice tawhīd of Him, and submit obediently towards Him.

For this reason, their wealth is called fay’ [the root of the word means to restore or return], because it returns to one who is more deserving of it and it returns to the usage for which it was created.

From amongst the abrogated [verses] of the Qur’an [in recitation, not in legislation] was the verse,

{WE ONLY SENT DOWN WEALTH SO THAT PRAYER WOULD BE ESTABLISHED AND ZAKĀH WOULD BE GIVEN.}

So, the people of tawhīd and obedience to Allah are more deserving of wealth than the people of kufr in Allah and shirk. Therefore, they seized their wealth. He also made the provision of His Messenger from that wealth, because it is the purest of wealth.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{SO, CONSUME WHAT YOU HAVE TAKEN OF WAR BOOTY [AS BEING] LAW- FUL AND GOOD}
(Surah Al Anfāl 8:69)

This was a matter through which Allah favoured Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) and his ummah, for He legalized war booty for them. It has also been claimed that the Ummah was favoured with the legality of ghanīmah taken through fighting, not fay'; and that what is taken without fighting [fay'] was halāl and mubāh for those nations before us. He made the provision of His Messenger from the latter [the fay'].

War booty is more lawful than other income for a number of reasons.
It is seized from one who does not deserve it, because he uses it to aid himself in disobeying Allah and associating others with Him.

So, if it is taken from one who uses it contrary to the obedience of Allah, the practice of tawhīd and the da'wah to worship Him, then such wealth becomes the most beloved of wealth to Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) and the purest form of income in His sight.

Also, he (صلى الله عليه و سلم) would not perform jihād except so that Allah's word would be the highest and His religion the most manifest. He did not perform jihād for the sake of ghanīmah.

So, provision would come to him pursuant to his worship and jihād fī sabīlillāh. Therefore, he did not dedicate any of his time solely towards seeking provision. Rather he would worship Allah in all his time, and practice tawhīd of Allah and be sincere to Him.

So, Allah made his provision easy during such worship, without him intending to seek it or endeavouring to pursue it.

It was reported in the mursal narration (i.e. reported with no mention of the Sahābī in the isnād) that,

He (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

"I AM THE MESSENGER OF MERCY. I AM THE MESSENGER OF THE MALHAMAH (BLOODY BATTLE). ALLAH SENT ME WITH JIHĀD AND HE DID NOT SEND ME WITH AGRICULTURE"
[reported by Ibn Sa'd in "at-Tabaqat"]

Al-Baghawī reported in his "Mu'jam" a marfū' hadīth (i.e. a hadīth whose words are conveyed as the Prophet's) that,

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

"INDEED, ALLAH HAS SENT ME WITH GUIDANCE AND THE RELIGION OF TRUTH. HE DID NOT MAKE ME A FARMER, NOR A MERCHANT, NOR A SHOUTER IN THE MARKETS. AND HE PLACED MY PROVISION IN MY SPEAR."

He mentioned the spear rather than the sword so that it is not understood that he got provision from the ghanīmah wealth. Rather, his provision was from the fay' that Allah granted him from Khaybar and Fadak.

Fay' is what the enemy leaves behind after fearfully fleeing, contrary to ghanīmah, which is taken through fighting with the sword. Therefore, mention of the spear more clearly indicates the acquirement of fay', because the spear is seen by the enemy from a distance, so he flees, and thus he flees from the spear's shade by which fay' is taken.

The provision of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) was from fay', not ghanīmah, which is taken by fighting with a sword. And Allah knows best.

Umar Ibn Abdil Aziz (رحيم الله) said,

"ALLAH SENT MUHAMMAD AS A GUIDE AND DID NOT SEND HIM AS A MONEY COLLECTOR."

So, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) spent his time with obedience of Allah and da'wah to His tawhīd, and whatever is acquired through that of wealth from fay' and ghanīmah, is acquired consequently, and not with the fundamental intention of pursuing it.

For these reasons, one who abandons jihād and instead busies himself with making money has been censured.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{AND SPEND IN THE WAY OF ALLAH AND DO NOT THROW [YOURSELVES] WITH YOUR [OWN] HANDS INTO DESTRUCTION}
[Surah Al Baqarah 2:195]

was revealed regarding such a situation, when the Ansār resolved to abandon jihād and work to improve their wealth and land.

And in the hadīth that was reported by Abū Dāwūd and others,

"IF YOU DEAL IN 'ĪNAH (A FORM OF RIBĀ), FOLLOW AFTER THE TAILS OF CATTLE, AND ABANDON JIHĀD, THEN ALLAH WILL GIVE HUMILIATION MASTERY OVER YOU AND HE WILL NOT REMOVE IT FROM YOU UNTIL YOU REVIEW YOUR RELIGION"
[Sahīh: reported by Imām Ahmad and Abū Dāwūd]

For this reason, the Sahābah (رضي الله عنه) disliked entering the land of kharāj (taxed land) for the sake of agriculture, because it distracts from jihād.

Makhūl said,

"WHEN THE MUSLIMS ENTERED SHĀM, THE PLANTS OF AL-HŪLAH WERE MENTIONED TO THEM, SO THEY PLANTED CROPS. THIS NEWS REACHED 'UMAR IBN AL-KHATTĀB (رضي الله عنه). SO, HE SENT SOMEONE TO THE CROPS AFTER THEY BECAME RIPE AND BURNT THEM WITH FIRE. HE THEN SENT A LETTER TO THEM SAYING, 'INDEED ALLAH PLACED THE PROVISION OF THIS UMMAH IN ITS SPEARHEADS AND BENEATH ITS SPEAR-TAILS. IF THEY FARM, THEY BECOME LIKE OTHER PEOPLE.'"
[This was reported by Asad Ibn Mūsā]

He also reported through an isnād of his that

Umar (رضي الله عنه) wrote,

“Whoever farms, follows after the tails of cattle, is pleased with such, and admits to it, I will enforce jizyah upon him.”

It was said to one of them,
“Why don’t you keep a farm for the family?”

So, he responded, “Wallāhi, we did not come as farmers, rather we came to kill the farmers and eat their crops.”

So, the best condition for the believer is that his time is spent in obedience of Allah, jihād fī sabīlillāh, and da’wah to His obedience. He should not seek the dunya.

And he should take from the wealth of fay’ and from other sources of wealth what is merely sufficient, as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) would take food which would suffice his family for a year.

He would take it from the fay’ and divide the rest. And sometimes he might see someone needy thereafter and then give him his family’s food, and so his family would remain without anything.

And likewise, is the case for one who is busy with knowledge, because it is from the two forms of jihād, so his dedication to knowledge is like jihād fī sabīlillāh and da’wah to Him.

If he takes from the money of fay’ or waqf, he should take only what suffices him to strengthen himself in his jihād. He should not take more than his need from it.

Imām Ahmad (رحيم الله) has specifically mentioned that one should not take more than his need from the wealth in baytul-māl such as the kharāj (land tax). And the money from waqf is even more strict.

And whoever is busy with his duties towards Allah, then Allah will oversee his provision,

As is mentioned in the hadīth on the authority of Zayd Ibn Thabit that,

Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

"WHOEVER'S CONCERN IS THE DUNYĀ, ALLAH WILL SCATTER HIS AFFAIRS AND PLACE HIS POVERTY BEFORE HIS EYES. NOTHING WILL COME TO HIM OF THE DUNYĀ EXCEPT WHAT HAS BEEN DECREED FOR HIM. AND WHOEVER'S INTENT IS THE HEREAFTER, ALLAH WILL GATHER FOR HIM HIS AFFAIRS AND WILL PLACE HIS PROSPERITY IN HIS HEART. THE DUNYĀ WILL COME TO HIM AGAINST ITS WILL."
[It was reported by Imām Ahmad and Ibn Mājah with a Sahīh isnād]

At-Tirmidhī reported from the marfū' narration of Anas that,

Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

"ALLAH SAYS, 'O SON OF ĀDAM, DEVOTE YOURSELF TO MY WORSHIP AND I WILL FILL YOUR HEART WITH PROSPERITY. IF YOU DO NOT DO SUCH, I WILL FILL YOUR HANDS WITH WORK AND WILL NOT SETTLE YOUR POVERTY'"
[Sahīh: reported by Imām Ahmad, at-Tirmidhī, and others on the authority of Abū Hurayrah]

Ibn Mājah reported from the marfū' hadīth of Ibn Mas'ud that,

Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

"WHOEVER MAKES HIS CONCERNS ONE CONCERN – FOR HIS HEREAFTER – ALLAH WILL COVER THE CONCERN FOR HIS DUNYĀ. AND WHOEVER'S HEART IS SPLIT BY MANY CONCERNS FOR THE MATTERS OF THE DUNYĀ, THEN ALLAH WILL NOT CARE IN WHICHEVER VALLEY HE IS DESTROYED"
[Hasan: reported by Ibn Mājah on the authority of Ibn 'Umar and Ibn Mas'ud]

It was also reported in some Isrā'īlī narrations that,

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

"O DUNYĀ, SERVE WHOEVER SERVES ME, AND EXHAUST WHOEVER SERVES YOU."